

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-07 IO-13 AID-05 OMB-01

TRSE-00 MCE-00 /105 W

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R 041205Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5136

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOGADISCIO 1333

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SO, ET, UR, PFOR

SUBJ: SOVIET AMBASSADOR'S COMMENTS ON OGADEN CRISIS AND SOVIET/
SOMALI RELATIONS

SUMMARY: SOVIET AMBASSADOR SAMSONOV TOLD EMBOFF THAT SOVIET UNION IS STILL CONTINUING MILITARY SUPPORT TO SOMALIA AND THAT IT HAS NOT RPT NOT REDUCED ITS MIL ADVISORY PRESENCE. HE CLAIMED MOSCOW'S SOLE DISAGREEMENT WITH SIAD GOVT WAS OVER INTERPRETATION OF MENGISTU'S REGIME: TO SOMALIA, MENGISTU IS BLOODTHIRSTY TRIBALIST; TO MOSCOW, HE IS SOCIALIST WHO HAS HELPED BRING REVOLUTIONARY TRANSFORMATION TO ETHIOPIA. SAMSONOV PESSIMISTIC OVER CHANCES OF MEDIATING OGADEN CRISIS AND ACKNOWLEDGED THAT UNDECLARED WAR IN OGADEN HAD PUT SOVIET UNION IN DIFFICULT POSITION. FOR TIME BEING,
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HE SEES NO SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE IN SOMALIA'S RELATIONS WITH MOSCOW. HE IS CONVINCED HOWEVER THAT SOVIET POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO ETHIOPIA IS REAL AND LASTING AS BEFITS ETHIOPIA'S SIZE AND IMPORTANCE IN AFRICA. HE APPEARS TO BE TROUBLED BY DILEMMA IN WHICH THIS PUTS USSR.

1. SOVIET AMBASSADOR SAMSONOV TOLD EMBOFF DURING DISCUSSION

AT SOVIET EMBASSY AUGUST 4 THAT SOVIET UNION HAD NOT RPT NOT REDUCED SOVIET MILITARY ADVISORS IN SOMALIA. IN RESPONSE TO EMBOFF'S OBSERVATION THAT THERE WERE FEWER RUSSIANS ON LOCAL BEACHES THAN IN SPRING OF 1976, SAMSONOV SAID JULY-AUGUST WAS PERIOD OF ANNUAL HOLIDAY FOR SOVIET TEACHERS, DOCTORS, AND ADVISORS' FAMILIES. LIKE HIS OWN FAMILY, MANY RUSSIANS WERE CURRENTLY IN SOVIET UNION. SAMSONOV SAID HE HAD BEGUN HIS ANNUAL TWO-MONTH HOLIDAY IN MOSCOW IN EARLY JULY BUT BECAUSE OF OGADEN EMERGENCY RETURNED TO MOGADISCIO JULY 27. SAMSONOV ALSO SAID THAT THERE WAS SOME TURNOVER OF SOVIET PERSONNEL AS FEW DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS COMPLETED, BUT HE INSISTED THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO RPT NO REDUCTION OF SOVIET PERSONNEL IN SOMALIA AND NO REQUEST BY GSDR TO DO SO.

2. ON STATE OF SOMALIA-SOVIET RELATIONS, SAMSONOV SAID THAT THERE WAS ONLY ONE POINT ON WHICH SIAD GOVERDMNAT DISAGREED WITH MOSCOW. THIS WAS THEIR POSITION WITH REGARD TO ETHIOPIA. MOSCOW REGARDED MENGISTU AS LEADER WHO HAD ACHIEVED GENUINE REVOLUTION IN VITALLY IMPORTANT AFRICAN COUNTRY. ALTHOUGH MENGISTU'S LEADERSHIP SEEMED TO LAIK A CLEAR IDENTITY AT THIS POINT, NEVERTHELESS HE WAS LEADER ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION. POWER STRUGGLE HAD TAKEN PLACE; BLOOD HAD BEEN SHED; POLITICAL AND SOCIAL COSTS WERE BEING PAID; BUT THIS DDD NOT NEGATE MENGISTU'S ROLE IN LEADING ETHIOPIA FORWARD ALONG SOCIALIST ROAD TO DEVELOPMENT. SOMALI VIEW, ON OTHER HAND, WAS THAT MENGISTU'S CONFIDENTIAL

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LEADERSHIP HAD TRIBAL RATHER THAN POLITICAL BASE AND MENGISTU HIMSELF WAS BLOODTHIRSTY TRIBALIST WHO LACKED MARXIST CREDENTIALS AND DID NOT LEGITIMATELY REPRESENT SOCIALIST ASPIRATIONS. ALTHOUGH MOSCOW TOTALLY DISAGREED WITH SOMALI INTERPRETATION OF ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION, IT DID NOT INSIST THAT SOMALIS ACCEPT OBJECTIVE SUPEIORITY OF SOVIET INTERPRETATION. HISTORY HOWEVER WOULD PROVE MOSCOW RIGHT.

3. SAMSONOV SAID THAT THIS WAS ONLY SERIOUS DIFFERENCE BETWEEN TWO GOVERNMENTS. RUMORS THAT SOVIET PRESENCE WAS BEING REDUCED OR THAT SOMALI REVOLUTION -- WHICH IN ITS OWN WAY WAS AS GENUINE AS ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION -- WAS ABOUT TO CHANGE COURSE WERE ILLUSORY. SOMALIA, LIKE ETHIOPIA, WAS ON SOCIALIST ROAD TO DEVELOPMENT AND ARAB MONEY WOULD NOT CHANGE THIS ORIENTATION.

4. ASKED HOW HE FORESAW CONSEQUENCES OF CURRENT STRUGGLE IN OGADEN, SAMSONOV SAID IT WAS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO JUDGE. SOVIET UNION WAS IN DIFFICULT POSITION AND HE WAS NOT CERTAIN WHAT ULTIMATE OUTCOME WOULD BE. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION, HE SAID SOVIET UNION HAD ATTEMPTED

IN PAST TO MEDIATE BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES AND BRING A OUT
SOME SORT OF RECONCILIATION, BUT ATTEMPT HAD BEEN TOTAL
FAILURE. HE SAID USSR WOULD CONTINUE ITS ATTEMPTS TO
ACHIEVE PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT AS OPPORTUNITIES ARISE BUT
HE WAS AT LOSS TO DESCRIBE WHAT FINAL DENOUEMENT MIGHT
BE. HE WAS CERTAIN OF ONE THING; THE ETHIOPIANS WOULD
NEVER PERMANENTLY YIELD TERRITORY TO SOMALIA, REGARDLESS
OF HOWLONG ITS RECOVERY MIGHT TAKE: ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION
HAD NOT OCCURRED TO PERMIT ITS DISMEMBERMENT AT HANDS
OF NEIGHBORS.

5. SAMSONOV UNDERSTOOD THAT SOMALIA HAD REQUESTED ARMS
FROM US AND THAT WASHINGTON HAD AGREED TO GIVE SIAD
WEAPON. EMBOFF SAID THAT US HAD AGREED IN PRINCIPLE
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TO HELP SOMALIA MEET ITS DEFENSIVE NEEDS. NO ARMS
DELIVERIES HAD TAKEN PLACE AND SOMALI WEAPONS LIST WAS
NOW BEING REVIWWED IN WASHINGTON. US PROBLEM WAS THAT
IT HAD NO INTENTION TO INVOLVE ITSELF IN OGADEN
INSURGENCY AND ANY WEAPONS PROVIDED SOMALIA AT THIS TIME
WOULD APPEAR TO SUPPORT SOMALI MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN OGADEN.

6. SAMSONOV AGREED COMPLETELY THAT UNDECLARED WAR WAS
TAKING PLACE IN OGADEN. ASKED IF SOVIET MILITARY
ADVISORS HAD ATTEMPTED TO THWARTMNA INITIATIVE IN OGADEN,
SAMSONOV SAID NO - THAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IMPOSSIBLE FOR
SOVIET ADVISORS TO PLAY SUCH A HIGH-HANDED ROLE. SIAD
WAS THUS CORRECT WHEN HE TOLD NEWSWEEK'S DE BORCHGRAVE
THAT SOVIET UNION HAD NOT INTERFERRED IN SOMALIA DEOMESTIC
AFFAIRS. HAD MOSCOW OR ITS ADVISORS IN SOMALIA ATTEMPTED
TO OVERRULE ANY SNA COMMAND DECISION, THEY WOULD NOT HAVE
SURVIVED LONG IN SOMALIA. SOVIET UNION HAD BEEN UNABLE
TO PREVENT SOME SNA COMMITTMENT TO SNA FORCES FIGHTING
IN OGADEN.

7. REGARDING SOMALIA'S MILITARY DEFENSE NEEDS, AMBASSADOR
SAMSONOV SAID THAT SNA HAD ALL MILITARY EQUIPMENT IT
REQUIRED FOR ITS LEGITIMATE DEFENSE. MOREOVER, SOVIET

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ACTION AF-10

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FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

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INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

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MILITARY SUPPLIES TO SNA WERE CONTINUING IN ACCORDANCE
WITH PREVIOUS MILITARY AGREEMENTS.

8. SAMSONOV AGREED WITH EMBOFF THAT SOVIET POSITION AS
MILITARY SUPPLIER TO BOTH ETHIOPIA AND SOMALIA PUT
MOSCOW IN EXTREMELY DELICATE POSITION. HE OBSERVED
HOWEVER THAT SOVIET/SOMALIA COLLABORATION IN SOCIAL,
POLITICAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS WAS CONTINUING WITHOUT
INTERRUPTION.

9. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION, SAMSONOV SAID THAT HE WAS
UNAWARE OF ANY RECENT ATTEMPT IN MOSCOW TO MEDIATE OGADEN
CRISIS. HE SAID THAT AT ANY GIVEN TIME, DELEGATIONS FROM
BOTH MOGADISCIO AND ADDIS WERE IN USSR AND HE DID NOT
RULE OUT POSSIBILITY THAT RECENTLY SOME CONCILIATION
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ATTEMPT MIGHT HAVE BEEN MADE. HE DENIED HE HAD PARTICI-
PATED IN ANY SUCH ATTEMPT.

10. MOREOVER, HE WAS PESSIMISTIC AS TO SUCCESS OF ANY
PRESENT MEDIATION INITIATIVE GIVEN SOMALIAS DETERMINATION
TO SEIZE OGADEN AND ETHIOPIAN DETERMINATION TO RESIST IT.
WHEN EMBOFF SAID THAT SOMALIA SEIZURE OF DIRE DAWA AND
HARRAR MIGHT PUSH ETHIOPIANS TOO FAR, SAMSONOV SAID THAT
HIS SOMALI COMRADES HAD NEVER CLAIMED THAT DIRE DAWA,
HARRAR AND JIGJIGA WAS GENUINELY PART OF OGADEN.

1. COMMENT: EMBOFF HAS NOWN SAMSONOV SINCE MID-1974, WHEN SAMSONOV WAS COUNSELOR IN MOGADISCIO. THEY HAD FREQUENT CONTACTS FROM 1974 THROUGH MID-1976. EMBOFF WAS STRUCK BY EXTENT OF SAMSONOV'S PREOCCUPATION WITH ETHIOPIA AND STRENGTH OF HIS COMMITMENT TO ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION. THIS WAS IN CONTRAST TO SAMSONOV'S ATTITUDE AS RECENTLY AS 1976 WHEN ETHIOPIA WAS ONLY MARGINAL TO HIS INTERESTSMDND HE WAS OFTEN ILL-INFORMED ABOUT EVENTS IN ADDIS. DURING AUG 4 CONVERSATION, SAMSONOV RETURNED SEVERAL TIMES TO AUTHENTICITY OF ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION, ITS IMPORTANCE IN REGION AND IN AFRICA. HE WAS EQUALLY ADAMANT ABOUT SOMALIA'S SOCIALIST COMMITMENT HE APPEARED GENUINELY TROUBLED BY POSITION IN WHICH THIS PUTS SOVIET UNION AND HAS NO RPT NO EASY SUGGESTIONS AS TO HOW PRESENT CONFLICT MIGHT BE RESOLVED. EMBOFF'S IMPRESSION WAS THAT IF SIAD IS INDEED PUTTING PRESSURE ON SAMSONOV OR MOSCOW TO ABANDON ITS ADDIS ALLEGIANCE -- AND SAMSONOV'S STATE OF MIND SUGGESTS IT -- THEN SOMALI PLOY IS NOT WORKING. SAMSONOV SEEMS AS UNSURE AS ANYONE ELSE AS TO WHAT WILL FOLLOW. HE ADMITTED HE HASN'T SEEN SIAD SINCE HIS RETURN TO SOMALIA ON JULY 27.

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Message Attributes

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